

PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE LIFE OF
JACK GAINES THAXTON

HON. RALPH M. HALL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2009

Mr. HALL of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the life of Jack Gaines Thaxton who passed away August 7, 2009 at the age of 90. A lifelong Texan, Mr. Thaxton was born April 23, 1919 in Kaufman, Texas to Estelle Gaines Thaxton and John W. Thaxton. He spent his childhood and adolescent years in Rockwall, Texas, graduating from high school in 1937. Even in his early years, he demonstrated character qualities which would be associated with his name throughout his life. He dedicated himself to many activities in school including football, which he excelled in, baseball, and tennis, also taking pride in his perfect attendance record.

Upon graduating, Mr. Thaxton worked for three years as assistant manager for the Boyer Drug Company in Rockwall before volunteering for service in the Texas National Guard, later serving with the 112th Cavalry. During World War II, he campaigned in the Pacific Theater and in the liberation of the Southern Philippines and Luzon. After contracting malaria and hepatitis, Mr. Thaxton spent several months recovering in an Army hospital before being released in 1945. Mr. Thaxton received several decorations, including five bronze stars for meritorious service—valor.

After he returned to Texas, Mr. Thaxton enrolled at the University of Texas in Austin, Texas, where he earned a Bachelor Degree in Business Administration in 1949. Shortly after graduating, he married Marguerite Ruth Davis and the couple moved to Corpus Christi where he worked for H.E.B. Grocery Company for thirty years. Marguerite passed away after twenty-two years of marriage, and Mr. Thaxton later remarried to Marjorie N. Thaxton.

Mr. Thaxton decided to combine his passion for sports and education when he established a golf scholarship at his alma mater, Rockwall High School, the proceeds of which help students further their academic goals.

He was a faithful member of the First United Methodist Church, a Mason, and later a member of the Al Amin Shrine Temple. He is survived by his son, James Eric Thaxton and his wife Carol Arnold Thaxton, along with three grandchildren.

Madam Speaker, I ask those present today to join me in honoring the life of this American veteran and dedicated American citizen, Mr. Jack Gaines Thaxton.

IN MEMORY OF WILLIAM POPE
"BILLY" LANGDALE, SR.

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2009

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of William Pope "Billy" Langdale, Sr., a man I was proud to call my friend and constituent. An accomplished public servant who was devoted to his community, state, country, his family, and

friends, Billy passed away on December 12, 2009, at the age of 88.

Billy lived his entire life in Valdosta in Lowndes County, Georgia. He graduated from Valdosta High School in 1938 where he was a proud member of the Valdosta Wildcat football team. He went on to attend the University of Georgia, where he played football for the Bulldogs before enlisting in the United States Marine Corps in 1942. He served in the Marines for 10 years and was awarded a Bronze Star before retiring at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

His public career began in 1960, when he was elected as chairman to the Lowndes County Board of Commissioners, where he served for 16 years. He then served as Chairman of the Georgia Department of Transportation board for 2 years before becoming the Second Congressional District representative on the DOT board, a post he held for more than 25 years. He was instrumental in numerous local transportation projects, from highway improvements to the six-laning of Interstate 75.

Billy fittingly received many accolades for his public service, including being named as one of Georgia Trend magazine's "100 Most Influential Georgians" as well as South Georgia Business magazine's list of the "Most Influential South Georgians." A highway in my district is named the "Billy Langdale Highway" in his honor. Upon his retirement in 2008, both the Georgia State Senate and the Georgia House of Representatives passed resolutions thanking Billy for his many years of service to the state.

Madam Speaker, the State of Georgia, especially the Second Congressional District, and our Nation have been truly blessed to have benefited from the tremendous leadership of Billy Langdale. He will be remembered for the compassion he spread continuously throughout his life, his great humor, his never ending modesty, his intense desire to help others, and his unwavering love for his family.

A TRIBUTE TO BOB HEFT

HON. DAVE CAMP

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2009

Mr. CAMP. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to and remember the life of an outstanding individual, Mr. Robert G. Heft of Saginaw, MI, who I am sad to report passed away this week.

Mr. Heft, who liked to be called simply "Bob," was a man whose innovation and patriotism created a legacy that reaches even into outer space.

Bob was the man behind a true representation of patriotism, the symbol of our Nation that flies proudly today above this very building, across the country, around the world, and yes, is even on the moon.

Using his mother's sewing machine and a hot iron, Bob created the first fifty-star flag as an assignment for school. His teacher originally gave him a B minus, so they made a deal: if Bob's design was accepted by Congress, he would change the grade to an A.

So Bob sent his prototype to his Governor and Congressman.

Then, one morning in 1958, Bob received a very special phone call. On the other end of

the line was President Dwight D. Eisenhower, personally calling the high schooler to tell him that Bob's version of the American Flag was picked by the President to replace the 48-star flag as the official design for our recently-expanded Nation. Bob's flag was chosen from more than 190,000 entries submitted.

Bob was there with the President on July 4, 1960, when the flag was flown for the first time. What began as a history project later became the longest-serving flag in American History, an American icon, and the true face of freedom. Bob's work is an inspiration to our students that each morning recite the pledge of allegiance to the flag of the United States of America.

And yes, it was his flag that just a few years later was launched and planted on the Moon, a perpetual reminder that our citizens' innovative talents know no bounds.

Bob's service to our Nation did not end there though. He was a longtime Professor at Northwest State Community College in Archbold, Ohio. After his retirement, Bob served as mayor of Napoleon, Ohio for 14 years, becoming the longest serving mayor in the town's history. During this time, Bob also became a popular motivational speaker, going to schools and veterans' groups all over the country to tell his unique stories. The many that met him said that Bob emanated a true warmth and love for his country.

I wish to extend my sincere thanks to Bob Heft, a true patriot throughout his life. I also wish to extend my deepest condolences to his family and friends. Though most citizens may have never met him, all have been touched by the symbol of American freedom that he created, and has become part of the integral fabric of this country.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 3288,
CONSOLIDATED APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2010

SPEECH OF

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 10, 2009

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3288, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2010. This bill provides the necessary funding to sustain our agencies covered by six regular appropriations bills and incorporates many key projects that directly benefit our communities nationwide.

I am very supportive of providing resources to ensure that quality programs and projects continue to receive assistance to improve infrastructure, expand education programs, retain jobs, and provide adequate equipment and service to our military personnel and veterans. I would like to thank my colleagues for their leadership on this bill and their support of projects in South Texas.

I am happy to note that within this agreement I was able to secure funding for several projects benefiting my district. Through these appropriations, new jobs and innovative developments will continue to advance our community as well as contribute to the future of our country. Some of these projects include: \$500,000 for facilities and equipment at the University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College, \$250,000 for the Texas